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Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 15 December 2008, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Majoor ..... (Netherlands)

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08-64945 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda (PBC/3/SLE/1)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Biannual review of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework (PBC/3/SLE/L.1)

2. **The Chairperson** drew attention to the draft conclusions and recommendations of the second biannual review of the implementation of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework (PBC/3/SLE/L.1), developed jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone, its partners in Sierra Leone and the members of the Sierra Leone configuration. In that connection, he welcomed the contribution of the Government of Sierra Leone to the progress report on the implementation of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework (PBC/2/SLE/9) and the tireless efforts of the Sierra Leone configuration members in implementing the Framework. In addition, he acknowledged the important role played by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) and the Peacebuilding Support Office in providing support and ensuring timely information-sharing between New York and Freetown. He was particularly grateful to the Acting Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone in that regard.

3. He took it that the Commission wished to adopt the draft conclusions and recommendations of the second biannual review of the implementation of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework (PBC/3/SLE/L.1).

4. *It was so decided.*

5. **Ms. Bangura** (Sierra Leone), noting that a year had passed since the Cooperation Framework had been endorsed, said that Sierra Leone had stayed focused on consolidating peace and generating growth, notwithstanding the global economic crisis.

6. Her delegation acknowledged the unstinting efforts of the Sierra Leone configuration in ensuring the continued engagement of all stakeholders. Those efforts, in conjunction with the high-level stakeholders consultation held on 19 May 2008 for the implementation of the Cooperation Framework, had been catalytic in broadening the donor base to include non-traditional partners. She also acknowledged the continued support provided by the United Nations system as a whole and by bilateral and other multilateral institutions.

7. The changing role of the United Nations in Sierra Leone over the past decade demonstrated the steady progress made. The successful local government elections recently held were a further testament to the peaceful and transparent transition to democracy. In an effort to restore the nation's shattered image, President Koroma had launched his Agenda for Change and had also initiated a number of policies aimed at combating corruption and generating attitudinal change among citizens. Ministers held portfolios on a contractual basis and were expected to produce results within specific time frames. The key priorities of the Agenda for Change focused on the provision of energy, improvements in the agricultural sector and advances in the health and education sectors. Those priorities also fell within the overarching goals of the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework.

8. As part of his open Government initiative, President Koroma had recently disclosed his assets and had encouraged all cabinet ministers and public officials to do the same. That initiative was intended to strengthen accountability and transparency while also promoting human rights and the rule of law. The adoption of robust legislation to combat drug trafficking and corruption also underscored the Government's commitment to addressing the root causes of conflict and to creating an enabling environment for private sector development and macroeconomic stability.

9. Sierra Leone had experienced a marked improvement in its security and governance as a result of the reform of its justice and security sectors. As a beneficiary of one of the most highly rated peacekeeping and consolidation efforts undertaken by the United Nations, Sierra Leone wished to express its gratitude to the international community by participating fully in future United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Her Government would welcome support from the international community in .that regard.

10. The elaboration of the second-generation poverty reduction strategy paper was in its final stages. The cost of funding, as set out in the Agenda for Change, was $2.1 billion, $1.2 billion of which had been committed by development partners within the current

Medium-Term Expenditure Framework for 2009-2011. Sierra Leone needed to close the $900 million shortfall in order to attain its 10 per cent economic growth rate target, which would significantly reduce the number of citizens living on less than a dollar a day.

11. Sierra Leone had come a long way in implementing the Cooperation Framework. The Government was addressing crucial aspects of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations and key socio-economic challenges, including high youth unemployment. However, the low revenue base remained an ongoing challenge to the peace consolidation process. In order to fulfil its commitments, her Government therefore sought the support of international partners to mobilize much-needed resources. To that end, the Peacebuilding Commission should ensure that the next Sierra Leone Consultative Group meeting focused on attracting new and non-traditional partners.

12. In view of the increasing risk of drug proliferation in the subregion, her Government wished to express its sincere appreciation to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for helping the Sierra Leonean law enforcement agencies to establish the Joint Drug Interdiction Task Force. Indeed, in addition to the illicit activities of international drug cartels, the recent acts of piracy witnessed in the territorial waters of the subregion posed an unwelcome new security threat that must not be ignored.

13. Her Government welcomed the recent establishment of UNIPSIL, was encouraged by the new direction of the United Nations country team, whose continued support to Sierra Leone was highly appreciated, and fully supported the Joint Vision of the United Nations Family for Sierra Leone. She therefore appealed to donors to provide financial contributions to United Nations activities through the joint multi-donor fund.

14. In conclusion, she welcomed the adoption of the draft conclusions and recommendations of the second biannual review and reiterated her Government's commitments to vigorously pursue national unity and inter-party dialogue, to step up the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, particularly the constitutional review process, to streamline the Government's aid coordination process and to resume Development Partnership Committee meetings.

15. **Mr. Schulenburg** (Acting Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone) commended the Government of Sierra Leone on the enormous progress that it had made in democratizing its society, as evidenced in particular by the success of the recent local council elections. Sierra Leone now enjoyed an exceptional level of internal security compared with the situation in the region and also had a steady level of economic growth, at 6 to 7 per cent per annum. Furthermore, the food security situation in the country had improved as a result of the Government's commendable efforts to stockpile and distribute food. Considerable strides had been made in the field of health through joint campaigns conducted by the United Nations and the Government, which had led to a dramatic improvement in child mortality rates in particular.

16. While ordinary citizens, senior Government officials and development partners were naturally impatient to reap the full benefits of peace, it was nevertheless important for them to have realistic expectations about what could reasonably be achieved. In that connection, more dialogue was needed between the Government and development partners as well as a more deliberate policy of outreach to the population of Sierra Leone. The Peacebuilding Commission could play a major role in that process of dialogue.

17. The President's Agenda for Change contained the priorities, policies and modalities on which the Government of Sierra Leone would base its future plans, including its poverty reduction strategy paper. He welcomed the Government's intention to focus on the transition from national recovery to economic growth and urged the international community to support the President's call for more investment in Sierra Leonean agriculture, energy and transport. The Agenda for Change was a well-balanced document which deserved the full support of the international community, particularly the donor community. For its part, the Peacebuilding Commission should ensure that a focused approach was adopted in support of the priorities formulated by the Government.

18. It was essential for peace consolidation efforts to incorporate potential risk factors. He was therefore particularly pleased that the President's Agenda for Change referred to the three most important risk factors in Sierra Leone: illicit drugs, corruption and youth unemployment. He also commended the Government for its direct commitment to deal with

those risks, particularly illicit drug trafficking, which posed the greatest risk of all. The threat from the international drug cartels operating in the region was far too great for the Government of Sierra Leone to face alone, especially given the country's explosive combination of high youth unemployment and low government salaries. However, the prevention of drug trafficking in Sierra Leone was still possible at a relatively low cost, since the drugs trade had not yet taken control of the national economy. He therefore urged the international community to invest in counter-narcotics efforts in Sierra Leone.

19. He also sought the Peacebuilding Commission's support for the Joint Vision of the United Nations Family for Sierra Leone, an integrated strategy which combined the political mandate of UNIPSIL, on the one hand, and the development and humanitarian mandates of the other United Nations agencies working in Sierra Leone, on the other. Furthermore, drawing attention to a number of outreach efforts initiated to engage local non-governmental organizations and civil society in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone, he stressed the importance of the Peacebuilding Commission's role in fostering international outreach efforts.

20. Henceforth, the integrated peacebuilding mission on the ground would be much smaller, expert-driven and purely civilian in nature. That raised questions concerning the relationship not only between the integrated peacebuilding mission in the country and the Peacebuilding Commission in New York, but also between the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework, national priorities and the priorities set by the United Nations. It was also important to consider whether an accepted concept for peacebuilding existed, since such a concept had yet to be applied systematically. However, owing to the good level of cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission, the Government of Sierra Leone and development partners, work was already under way to develop a model for peacebuilding that could be applied to other countries.

The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 11.05 a.m.

21. **Mr. Pascoe** (Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs) commended the Acting Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone on his excellent work in assessing the needs of the new mission on the ground. He agreed that United Nations agencies must act as one to ensure the success of the operation in Sierra Leone and to eliminate bureaucracy as far as possible. The Peacebuilding Commission could play an important role by supporting the efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone, particularly through effective coordination with Headquarters in New York. He pledged to work closely with the Commission with a view to further improving the situation on the ground.

22. **Ms. Lute** (Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support) said that there was no clear road map for the process in Sierra Leone and that the peacebuilding path was always one of experimentation and risk-taking. Despite Sierra Leone's extraordinary progress in terms of economic growth, local elections, anti-corruption measures, and the beginning of civil service reform, it continued to face challenges and the Government had recently set out its priorities in its ambitious Agenda for Change.

23. The Secretary-General was eager to learn what had worked in Sierra Leone in terms of successful strategies for political reconciliation, economic recovery and building a safe and secure environment. The Peacebuilding Support Office was preparing a report for the Secretary-General that would consider how the United Nations system could be used to support and contribute to an enabling environment in Sierra Leone. The Secretary-General would solicit input from all stakeholders and would look to the Peacebuilding Commission to inform his findings and recommendations.

24. **Mr. Soumare** (United Nations Development Programme) commended the Government of Sierra Leone on its progress in peacebuilding in 2008. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had drawn a number of lessons from the implementation of the Peacebuilding Fund projects in Sierra Leone and Burundi, including lessons in fund governance systems, project design, realistic time frames and guidance and oversight of project implementation. The Peacebuilding Fund project on youth empowerment and employment had received particular attention from the Peacebuilding Commission, as it was clear that if the situation of young people in Sierra Leone did not improve, it could become a trigger for conflict. UNDP would monitor activities under the youth empowerment and employment project, which was expected to create jobs for over 40,000 young people.

25. At a time of global financial crisis, there was a growing gap between the high expectations of the Sierra Leonean people and the capacities available to meet them. The Government of Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom Department for International Development, the European Commission, the World Bank and UNDP were working together to develop a comprehensive framework for long-term capacity-building to increase the overall effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of the public sector. UNDP, in partnership with the World Bank and the African Development Bank, was also supporting the Ministry of Mineral Resources in a renegotiation of major mining contracts, which should generate considerable resources and pave the way for transparent and accountable management of mineral wealth. Together with the World Bank and the African Development Bank, UNDP would also support the work of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources in managing the rich marine resources located within the 200-mile exclusive economic zone. In addition, it was working with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to establish a South-South cooperation unit to support an expanded partner network that would include countries with similar post-conflict and transition challenges.

26. As Sierra Leone transitioned from the phase of post-conflict recovery to one of peacebuilding consolidation and development, the UNDP country office had mobilized increasing levels of non-core resources, while its capacity had remained almost unchanged, which had led to challenges in delivering resources and in providing its partners with the expected level of reporting. A new management process was being implemented which would enable UNDP to be a credible partner in the integrated mission.

27. **The Chairperson** said that he looked forward to completion of the ongoing management reform so that UNDP could improve its effectiveness on the ground.

28. **Mr. McConnell** (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom welcomed the Sierra Leonean Government's commitment to change and the President's strong leadership as shown by his Agenda for Change and his support for transparency and anti-corruption measures. The international community and the Peacebuilding Commission should help to ensure that change occurred smoothly. The population had growing expectations in terms of governance, security and social and economic development, which would have to be met.

29. The second-generation poverty reduction strategy, when finalized, would provide a road map for growth and development, while acknowledging the requirements of good governance, the rule of law and security. Continued investment in the maintenance of peace and the enabling environment for development was essential — the successes achieved in the security sector should not be taken for granted. Many crucial government institutions were still operating at emergency levels, external global factors threatened economic growth, and the steady progress in terms of education and health services was far from sufficient to meet the Millennium Development Goals. There was also the danger of Sierra Leone becoming a routine transit point for drug trafficking. The new poverty reduction strategy only made the Peacebuilding Commission's function of monitoring critical peacebuilding issues even more important and its partnership with the Government more essential.

30. Revitalizing and integrating the United Nations family in Sierra Leone was imperative and he welcomed the Joint Vision of the United Nations Family for Sierra Leone. UNIPSIL had a key role to play in the peacebuilding efforts. The uncertainty over the appointment of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General should be resolved as soon as possible.

31. The Government should establish an aid coordination structure to support the poverty reduction strategy, which required significant additional funding. In turn, UNIPSIL would have to provide support for the coordination mechanism, and help international partners to harmonize their efforts. The Peacebuilding Commission could provide assistance from the outset in preparation for the next Consultative Group meeting.

32. The transition phase in Sierra Leone meant that the Peacebuilding Commission would have to offer advice and expertise in addition to the technical and financial resources already mobilized. Members would also have to be prepared to respond to emerging issues, find additional donors and increase their own donations if necessary, while continuing advocacy efforts for Sierra Leone. The United Kingdom fully supported the conclusions and recommendations of the biennial review.

33. **Mr. Deruffe** (France), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the progress made by Sierra Leone in its peacebuilding efforts. Many challenges remained, but the process was on the right track. He welcomed the commitment and leadership of the Sierra Leonean President, as demonstrated by his Agenda for Change.

34. The European Union approved the Joint Vision of the United Nations Family for Sierra Leone, which defined the way in which United Nations agencies and programmes and UNIPSIL would work together to coordinate their political and development efforts. The United Nations family in Sierra Leone, with its joint political and development mandate, competent staff and national coverage, had undeniable comparative advantages in providing technical assistance. The European Union hoped that all partners in Sierra Leone would coordinate their efforts with the United Nations and each other to ensure that their programmes were complementary.

35. **Ms. Viotti** (Brazil) welcomed the progress made by the Government of Sierra Leone in combating corruption, holding free and fair local elections, reforming the public sector and creating an enabling environment for private sector development. Sierra Leone was on the path to steady growth, which was critical for income and employment generation and would enable the Government to enhance the provision of social services. Schemes were needed to promote youth employment, as ensuring economic opportunities for young people was an important prerequisite for the long-term consolidation of peace. Brazil commended President Koroma on focusing his Agenda for Change on infrastructure, development of production sectors and human development, with particular emphasis on energy, agriculture and transportation.

36. As indicated in the progress report on implementation of the cooperation framework, Brazil and Sierra Leone had strengthened their relations over the past year. A technical cooperation agreement had been signed which would serve as an umbrella for cooperation projects. Technical staff from the Brazilian Agriculture Research Company had been dispatched to Sierra Leone to explore avenues for cooperation in agriculture.

37. Brazil had noted with great concern the threat posed by drug trafficking in West Africa, which was now spreading to Sierra Leone. Implementation of the Praia Action Plan would address the problem from a regional perspective and would be a key factor in strengthening the capacity of the countries concerned.

38. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) said that the level of representation of the Government of Sierra Leone at the meeting was a sign of its commitment to contributing to the work of the country configuration.

39. His Government commended Sierra Leone on its significant progress, and welcomed the Agenda for Change, which set out the priorities for the second poverty reduction strategy paper. He also welcomed the creation in Sierra Leone of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office. The international community should make every effort to support the Agenda for Change and provide Sierra Leone with direct budgetary support in accordance with the spirit of the Paris Declaration, including through expansion of the donor base to non-traditional donors. He commended the international partners on their efforts to coordinate aid for regional programmes and the Government of Sierra Leone on its implementation of a regional plan of action on drug trafficking and an anti-corruption programme. Sierra Leone had made great efforts to consolidate peace and further stabilize the subregion.

40. **Mr. Iqbal** (Pakistan) said that his country welcomed the measures taken by the Government of Sierra Leone, and supported the peacebuilding initiatives. Obstacles to peacebuilding included youth unemployment, difficulties in mobilizing resources, and lack of capacity on the part of government institutions. Sustained support by the Peacebuilding Commission and the international community was therefore essential. He hoped that the establishment of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office would help coordinate international efforts.

41. **Mr. Meurs** (United States of America) said that much had been achieved over the previous two years. It had taken longer than expected to draft an integrated peace strategy. However, that process had also helped the Commission to identify priorities and the connections between those priorities, such as that between security and development. New tools had been developed to help evaluate developments, address problems and mobilize international support.

42. His country fully supported the draft conclusions and recommendations (PBC/3/SLE/L.1). Efforts were needed to secure new donors and to pursue the Agenda

for Change. The Commission should consider supporting regional mechanisms and dialogue to tackle non-State threats to stability, such as drug trafficking. It should also examine ways to engage more creatively with the Government of Sierra Leone, other stakeholders and UNIPSIL, including through the employment of targeted initiatives.

43. **Mr. Travers** (Canada) said that his country welcomed the progress made in Sierra Leone, and in particular the President's efforts to reform governance. The development of the Joint Vision of the United Nations Family for Sierra Leone was also positive. Yet serious challenges, including drug trafficking, remained; attention should remain focused on the transition from conflict to economic development.

44. **Mr. Carew** (Sierra Leone) said the Commission had helped achieve progress in his country. The Agenda for Change analysed the obstacles that remained in certain areas. Sierra Leone was on the way to moving from aid dependence to economic growth, and looked forward to continued international support.

45. **Ms. Bangura** (Sierra Leone) said she was grateful to the United Nations, and to the Chairperson and the Government of the Netherlands, for their consistent support. The country owed an enormous debt to the international community, and must fulfil expectations. Inevitably, mistakes would occur in the process; her Government would address those mistakes together with the international community, and was determined to succeed.

46. **The Chairperson**, summarizing the points made at the meeting, said that as a result largely of the leadership and determination of the Government of Sierra Leone, substantial progress had been made over the previous two years. Democratic elections had been held, and forward-looking policies enacted. There had been improvements in security, justice reform and health. The presence on the ground of UNIPSIL and an Executive Representative made it easier for the United Nations and the international community as a whole to engage energetically with that process.

47. At the same time, many challenges remained. Greater resources were needed, although the situation appeared to be improving. The problem of trafficking in drugs needed to be addressed, including at the regional and subregional levels. There had been substantial progress in tackling corruption. The Peacebuilding Fund and other sources of funding were organizing projects to curb youth unemployment, an issue that was closely interconnected with security and development. However, the implementation of such projects continued to lag, and required urgent attention. Similarly, it was important to continue implementing all the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

48. The United Nations Development Programme was establishing a joint framework for capacity-building. He hoped that the framework would have a clear focus, and that it would concentrate on building capacity within the Government.

49. Aid coordination was also in need of improvement. Regular, inclusive donor meetings should be held, and a role formulated for the Consultative Group. The Peacebuilding Commission could hold more regular meetings on the ground; that issue was being addressed. Efforts were also being made to fill gaps in funding resources in terms both of domestic revenues and of international donors. To that end, the Peacebuilding Commission could play a role in international outreach.

50. All participants had welcomed the Agenda for Change and the Joint Vision. Both documents represented a shift from recovery to growth. The Commission should develop an integrated approach, emphasizing growth without ignoring the enabling environment. In the course of the meeting, questions had been raised regarding the relationship between the Commission and UNIPSIL, and between the various strategies. Over the following few months, action should be taken to ensure that those strategies did not interfere with one another.

51. Lastly, the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and early recovery would soon be issued. It would be worth examining how the lessons encapsulated in the report might apply to the case of Sierra Leone, and whether a broader concept of peacebuilding would be useful. Expectations were high, particularly among those involved in development work, but investment was not materializing as quickly as could be hoped and patience was needed. It was important to maintain a steady focus, combining ongoing dialogue with commitment and integrating both security and development. The situation remained critical. He hoped States would continue, both individually and collectively, to assist the Government in building a self-sustaining and irreversible peace against an improved economic background.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.